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ABSTRACT

A description of the beginning, growth, and present status of the highly successful placement service of the Baltimore City Public Schools, an extension of guidance service, was given. A broad spectrum of activities of the placement service will range through earn-learn programs with special emphasis on the "general" student; the co-involvement of business and industry for workshops, Project GO, the successful cooperative arrangement with the Job Bank of the Maryland State Department of Employment Security and the Department of Social Services; the operation of employment centers in schools; and specialized job development in order to point out the interlock of the various education programs and implications for career education. The information gained concerning occupational opportunities, labor conditions, educational qualifications and worker characteristics are valuable in counseling youth, establishing stronger links between education and the employment world, and in revising curriculum to meet the needs of all youth. (Author)

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Placement - A Real Service To Youth

Baltimore was one of the pioneers in the guidance movement that recognized that all students of all levels needed assistance in transfering from school to work world for at least a year until he was surer and more competent to adapt himself to this work world. Placement, begun in 1928, was seen as an extension of guidance. This move was predicated on a belief in the real worth of an individual and his right to make his own choices and decisions. Unless proper guidance was provided, some individuals are apt to make decisions which result in a waste of ability. Placement, as the end product of readiness for vocational planning focused it thrust not only to help youth enter on his chosen job but to provide employers with a source of qualified applicants.

Since preparation for work is an essential function of the educational system within Baltimore City Public Schools, youth must be furnished with knowledge of skill for jobs. Educational programs must deal with the problems of preparing youth for initial work experience. Within the total instructional program, adequate provisions must be made for students to gain insights, make self-appraisals, and determine their course of actions in an effort to reach a point of vocational maturity. Therefore, it is essential that an organization function to disseminate information about occupational information, labor conditions, educational qualifications, workers' characteristics, and provide a variety of choices so individuals may be assisted in decision-making.

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This service free to youth and employer and available the twelve months a year has grown from a staff of two placement counselors stationed in the Central Office to 46 trained professionals based in 14 comprehensive senior high schools, two vocational-technical schools, six general vocational schools, four special education centers, one adult center, and one school for teen-age mothers.

An added strength to the comprehensive placement of students (part-time, temporary, summer, permanent employment) was the interlocking of all work programs in special education, general vocational and business education under one unit. It consists of cooperative work-study, work experience and placement. In the Employment Centers in the individual schools, the coordinators are responsible for the total program development of all work-study and placement programs in cooperation with the teachers, counselors and administrators. Last year there were 65 programs in 32 schools. Over 2,000 students participated in the program. They worked approximately 900,000 hours and earned over $1,609000. Approximately 80% of these work-study positions lead to permanent placement. The goal of Job-Oriented Programs is to ease the gap between school life and the working world. At present the break-down of programs is business education, trade and industry, special education, general vocational and work-experience. Through the efforts of the Voluntary Council in the last two years great strides have been made in opening doors to secure jobs for students in the general and general academic area.

Youth is reached by a variety of methods through school, news media, displays, referrals by teachers. All potential graduates are encouraged to register for placement. All who withdraw from school not only see

their counselor but also the coordinator in the Employment Center.

All students who seek part-time or temporary employment fill out applications for jobs. Since many in the city are disadvantaged and need funds to continue their education, the counselors and placement coordinators work cooperatively to identify these students. A cooperative system has been initiated with Social Services to identify disadvantaged students who meet Federal guidelines for the various funded programs. These students are interviewed, prepared for, and referred to the jobs with follow-up of progress on the job.

Coordinators and counselors arrange for career days, career fairs, talks at various career clubs with employers as consultants. Teachers request placement coordinators to talk to their classes about various careers, trends, preparation, etc. Job Clinics are organized to prepare youth for: interviews with employers, completing applications, various qualifying tests companies use, and general information such as locating company, how to act in situations that are common to most beginners, salaries, etc.

In addition, the Division of Guidance and Placement had an occupational and Educational counselor who serves as a rich resource of information either through his monthly guidance Newsletter, career notes and/or as a speaker to classes.

In 1966, Project Go--a career development guidance oriented program--was initiated at a Junior High School with 900 ninth grade students at all levels. It is designed to meet the needs of ninth graders by helping them keep alive their aspirations for future gainful employment through

the exploration of career opportunities in the world of work. This is accomplished through the help of the Voluntary Council, employers in the Baltimore metropolitan area, governmental agencies, businesses, industries, manufacturers, hospitals, and colleges. The principal factor contributing to the success of the on-going program of Project GO is the participation in the program of every department in the school including administrators, teachers, and parents. Project GO has grown from one school in 1966 to the present 12 junior high schools, one senior high, three vocational and seven special schools making a total of twenty-three schools. Each program is divided into eight phases beginning with a kick-off assembly and ending with a job clinic.

In order to keep abreast of current job openings, the Placement coordinator is in constant contact with employers by phone or mail. Personal visits to the employer are a must! The employer and the coordinator meet to discuss changing job patterns, requirements, various questions about company and school policies, programs, the types of openings in his company and some of the problems that the student may encounter. If the company is participating on a cooperative training program, he welcomes the interest and the additional aid of the coordinators.

The Placement division maintains a close relationship with all civil service units, Chamber of Commerce, various personnel associations, and a variety of businesses. Calenders for non-conflicting dates of testing by these large units are arranged so that students may apply to take all tests.

An added dimension to the Placement Service is the assignment of a coordinator to the Job Bank of the Maryland State Employment Services. The coordinators stationed in the schools were instructed in the system's approach to job information. With the blend of the two services, a cooperative venture to use the Job Bank Book for summer jobs for drop-outs and graduates is proving advantagious to all concerned.

Another strength was added when the Voluntary Council for Equal Employment made up of top management of 115 firms, worked with coordinators to locate work-experience slots for the students considered to be generally prepared. These openings were designed to provide youth with experiences for his further self-study in the work world. Moreover, the coordinators participated in a two day workshop sponsored by this Council for mutual information, understanding, and preparation for the youth they orient to work.

The need for intensive concentration in the many expanding careers led to the establishment of Central Office Job Developers - namely health fields and apprenticeships. The coordinator for health services has reached each hospital in the metropolitan area of the city, major nursing homes, laboratories, health promotional councils and has established strong ties with all personnel. As a result these personnel have on-the-line opportunities for students to be placed either temporarily, part-time, permanent, or on an earn-learn situation.

In answer to cries that education was not heeding the needs of apprenticeship trades, a job developer sought out the various trades, union and non-union, Urban League, community agencies, arranged for tours by teachers and students to sites, secured panelists for assemblies

and subject classes. Special classes were set up so that the various apprentices could speak with interested students, prepare applicants for various trade tests, and schedule testing dates.

The successful placement of each individual is based on a personal interview of each applicant, whereby the coordinator seeks to determine the interests and vocational preferences of the student in relation to his abilities. A complete record is made of the student - his intelligence, achievement and any special aptitude tests, his character traits, work experiences, extra-curricular activities, and notes made of his strengths and needs. If the interviewee is undecided or unaware of his abilities, the coordinator may refer him for additional tests, or to his counselor, or to the library for occupational materials. Every effort is made to make Placement a personalized service both to the youth and the employer.

When the employers orders are made, the coordinator attempts to match student's requests with employers' needs. Referrals are given to the student with guidelines for making appointments and conduct during interview, as well as answering general questions. He is also instructed to report back the outcome to the coordinator. If he fails to secure the job, the coordinator continues to work with his client; frequently, this may require a year. Over the forty years Placement has placed some 70,000 students on full-time jobs; over 60,000 in part-time, and some 40,000 in temporary or summer openings.

The job of Placement does not end here. It is our aim to place him in that position where he and the employer derive the most benefit. All students on work-study programs are evaluated formally by the employer

at the close of the semester. If the employer wishes he may retain his worker; about 95% remain on the job. Youth not retained are helped to find permanent employment for they have many rich experiences upon which to draw. All youth who are placed on full-time permanent work are followed up at the end of three months and one year. In addition, a questionaire is sent to employers at the end of 6 months about the work--efficiency--attitude of the youth placed and are invited to make constructive criticisms of school programs. "She has been exceptional - in her ability to learn and carry out techniques, in her sense of responsibility and initiative. We will be looking for a person to fill a similar position this June and would like to interview several possible candidates." Nor is the worker overlooked, for he too is to respond to strength and weaknesses of the programs. "I have been with _____for four months now and it has been fascinating work from the beginning. I feel that I have caught on to most of the work. Finding it easy, I have to thank my wonderful high school teacher,_____ for that. I want to thank the placement service for helping me and many other young people, for being interested in us, caring, and knowing the business and industry community so well." We can attempt to learn in what ways the school did or did not prepare him for work, so that adjustments may be made for the benefit of future graduates.

The primary purpose of Placement is to help our students toward making the best occupational choice or adjustment. The information gained concerning occupational opportunities, labor conditions, educational qualifications, worker characteristics are valuable in counseling youth, establishing stronger links between education and employment world, and in revising curriculum to meet the needs of all youth. Three outstanding

values derive: one to the employer who has the responsibility to help and to be involved in order to help him find his place in employment. But, a third value results. The community as a whole benefits through optimum utilization of our most precious resource - the human being.

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